

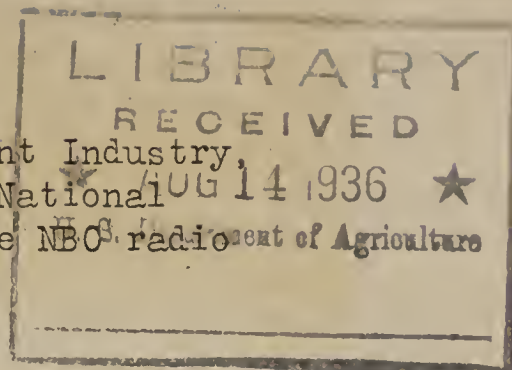
Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

1.9
P69 Rn

THE GARDEN CALENDAR

A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC radio stations, Monday, July 6, 1936.



Hello folks. If I were with you in your garden today and I told you that I would try to answer any three questions that you should ask me, I wonder what those questions would be. Judging from the letters I get, the first question would be "What can I plant in my garden during the remainder of the season and get results." Now, that all depends upon where you're located and about when you can expect frost, that is, the first killing frost in the fall. When I mentioned frost I saw a look of surprise on the faces of the folks here in the Washington studio for there is nothing in the atmosphere today that bears the remotest suggestion of frost. Leaving all jokes aside when you are figuring on planting late crops of sweet corn, cabbage, beets, carrots, snap beans and the like you must figure the number of days that you can count upon until you may expect an early fall frost in your section. If 90 days are required to produce a crop of late sweet corn and October 10th is the average date, one year with another, when frost occurs in your locality, then, this week is about the last call for planting sweet corn. There are varieties of snap beans that will produce edible pods in from 45 to 60 days from the time the seed is planted, and so, you could plant these varieties as late as August 10 or 15th and stand a good chance of getting a crop.

Right now is the time to do a little figuring on what you can grow during the remainder of the season. You southern folks will not have to worry about Jack Frost nipping your bean leaves for a long, long time. Your problem is to control the grass and get crops started in your gardens this hot summer weather.

In sections where there has been plenty of rainfall our gardeners are asking for information on how to control weeds. My experience has been that there is just one sure way to control weeds in the garden and that is the armstrong method. The main point in controlling weeds is to avoid letting them get started on you. We have had several good rains here around Washington during the past week and I'll admit the weeds have gotten a start of me. Crabgrass is one of the most pestiferous weeds that I have in my garden and this is the season when crabgrass is taking a firm hold on everything. If I do not get my flower borders and my vegetable garden cleaned out this week, I may as well move out myself for the weeds will get me. I don't know if you have the same trouble that I do or not, but when I hire somebody to work in my garden I simply can not get them to pull the weeds up by the roots. They insist on standing up straight and cutting the tops of the weeds off with a hoe. I don't believe the average worker nowadays has any joints in his spine, at least they do not seem to be able to stoop over to pull weeds. I like the way that the oldtime German market gardeners pulled weeds. When they were through weeding a row of onions or

carrots, not only were all the weeds taken out but the soil was left in a fine mellow condition around the plants. I have a couple of little finger-like wire scratchers that I use around small plants and they are simply wonderful for getting out the weeds, by the roots, and leaving the soil in fine condition. You can make a scratcher by simply driving three long wire brads through the end of a small piece of thin board, then whittle the other end of the board to the form of a handle. The board should be 8 to 10 inches long, 1/2 inch thick and 2 1/2 inches wide.

That's two questions and the third one coming from the region that has been hard hit by drought is how to make a little water go a long way in keeping the gardens alive and growing. My reply to this question is to mulch around the plants with straw, old cornstalks run through the shredder, or better still with stable manure that contains considerable bedding. If you have crops in your gardens that still show promise of making something I would advise working the soil around them and giving them a watering if water is available, then cover the surface to a depth of 3 to 5 inches with a mulching material to hold the moisture. I realize that in some sections the drought has been so severe that even straw is no longer available but leaves or as already suggested old cornstalks that are cut or shredded make a good mulch.

The outstanding question from gardeners everywhere is "How to control the insects that are destroying garden crops." The workers in the Bureau of Entomology and the entomologists of the State Colleges and Experiment Stations are in position to give the latest news on insect control. Incidentally I have found that the control of garden insects is very much the same as the control of weeds, it is a matter of everlasting vigilance and preventing the pests getting a start on you. A good garden means work and plenty of it and don't get the idea that you can sit in the shade of a tree and watch the garden grow. It will grow all right, grow weeds and insects but you will not grow fat on the products of your garden no matter how closely you watch it from your comfortable seat in the shade of a tree.

#####